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## Letters to the Editor

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### Weakened Voice?

SIR: It is unusual for a syndicated columnist to defend censorship of the news and personal demagoguery. But Maggie Higgins has done just this in her June 14 Star column on current doldrums alienating the employees of the Voice of America, USIA's radio arm, from its director, Carl Rowan.

The issue involved is simply one of highly unprofessional censorship of news items in the daily newscasts which comprise the main output of the Voice, the daily editorial wrap-ups that reflect the press of the U.S. and perhaps more closely the only true "voice" of America, and censorship of the many commentators who write for the daily programs.

The crux of the matter is that the Voice has recently become a tactical instrument and quasi-military in nature. It should be returned as soon as possible to that of the worldwide radio network popular for its highly objective news—warts and all. Old professionals at the Voice are concerned only that listeners around the globe—detached from the political careers of a Carl Rowan or a Lyndon B. Johnson—will stop listening to what has been as close to the truth as is humanly possible.

President Kennedy first manipulated the Voice during the Cuban crisis and used it to serve the Defense Department and CIA with around-the-clock Spanish broadcasts which should have properly been separated from regular VOA programs. The present administration has exacerbated the role, and at the same time has imposed daily policy restrictions that often haggle over the use of a single word. In a brief time under Mr. Rowan's aegis VOA news has become stale, commentaries no longer comment, and editorial round-ups round up only what is highly complimentary to the administration.

John R. Bowler.

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